School report

Kings Hedges Primary School

Northfield Avenue, Cambridge, CB4 2HU

Inspection dates	1–2 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	**Good**	**2**
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and sets high expectations for staff and pupils alike. She has received good support from other leaders and managers in improving the school. Together, they have built on the strengths in teaching and achievement found at the last inspection.
- Leaders have been supported well in their work by the governing body, whose members bring valuable expertise to their role.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, and there are frequent examples of exemplary attitudes to learning in the older classes. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with rich and varied experiences. These contribute greatly to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- From low starting points on entry to Year 1, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1.
- Although standards in Year 6 dipped in mathematics and writing in 2014, pupils currently in the school have made good progress at Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is good at Key Stages 1 and 2, and it is outstanding in Year 6. The teaching of handwriting is exceptional throughout the school and, as a result, pupils' books are extremely well presented.
- The school works very closely with other agencies and provides outstanding support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although provision for children in the early years has improved since the last inspection, it still requires improvement.
- Children make good progress in some areas of learning, but the proportion who reach a good level of development is well below average. There is a significant gap between the attainment of girls and that of boys at the end of the Reception Year.
- Children in the early years do not have enough opportunities to develop their communication and language skills.
- On occasion, work is not matched well enough to the needs of less able children so that they make less progress than their classmates do.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 27 lessons. In combination with looking at pupils' books, talking to pupils about their work and checking their progress over time, this provided a balance of evidence on teaching and learning. An inspector listened to some pupils at Key Stage 1 read, looked at arrangements at break and lunchtime, observed an assembly and talked with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, and the literacy and numeracy leaders. Interviews took place with a group of five governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and looked at a bigger response to the school's own parental survey. Inspectors also considered the 65 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included: the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance; and systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Natasha Campbell	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Rudman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has reorganised its classes so that, from Year 1 to Year 6, all the pupils in each year group are taught in one large class by two teachers and a number of teaching assistants.
- Children in the Reception Year, who attend full time, learn in three separate classes.
- The school serves an area that is made-up almost entirely of local authority and social housing.
- The proportions of pupils who come from a minority ethnic background and who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average. This funding is for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, particularly in some year groups; this was the case in Year 6 in 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has taken on a number of newly qualified teachers since the last inspection, and there have been several staffing changes in the early years.
- The school manages 'So to Speak', which is pre-school provision that focuses on children aged from two to three years whose language development is delayed. It also manages a nursery, which was separated from the primary school in 2011 and subsequently rejoined a federation. Both of these aspects of provision are subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision in the early years and increase the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by:
  - providing more opportunities for children to develop their communication and language skills
  - improving the staff's questioning skills and the way they communicate with the children
  - narrowing the gap between the attainment of boys and that of girls
  - making sure that tasks set for less able children are consistently matched to the next steps in their development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher cares passionately about the school and provides inspirational leadership. She has established a clear, shared belief that the school can have an impact upon the lives and life chances of the pupils. Her high expectations underpin many aspects of the school's work and inform the way teachers try to pass on high aspirations to the pupils.

- The deputy headteachers and other staff with specific responsibilities, such as the literacy and numeracy leaders, provide good support to the headteacher. They all contribute to efforts to raise achievement and improve the quality of education. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and leaders have established a culture in which teaching can flourish, exceptionally good behaviour is the norm and relationships are positive.

- The leadership of teaching is good. There are rigorous systems for checking all aspects of teaching and learning and for managing teachers' performance. Senior leaders provide good support for teachers, including those who are newly qualified. The school has begun to work on a research project with Cambridge University to identify the features of outstanding teaching that bring about the greatest gains in progress for pupils.

- Leaders collect and analyse a substantial amount of information about pupils' attainment and progress, and hold regular meetings with teachers to review pupils' achievement. They use the resulting data to identify where improvement is needed, to ensure pupils receive equal opportunities and to prevent any discrimination.

- The school makes good use of its pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have spent the money to provide support in mathematics, phonics, spelling, grammar, reading and comprehension. They have used it to fund after-school clubs to support eligible pupils' learning, to finance counselling and support to encourage regular attendance at school. These initiatives have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

- The school makes good use of its primary physical education and sport premium. It has used its funding to pay a specialist teacher to develop the quality and variety of sports teaching across the school, and to provide a wide range of sports clubs. This has improved pupils' physical skills, expanded the experiences available to them and led to an increase in their participation in competitive sport.

- The school has completely revised its curriculum since the last inspection. This has resulted in rich and varied learning opportunities that promote pupils' academic achievement well and give rise to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This has been achieved partly by the school forging some highly productive links that broaden pupils' horizons and by the inspiring learning opportunities provided.

- A link with The Perse School (a high-performing independent school) has enabled a group of pupils in Year 6 to work with sixth formers in a range of art history activities, and sixth formers have been into school to support able mathematicians. A firm of local solicitors has provided mentoring to pupils in Year 6, and the school has visits from scientists from the university and the nearby Science Park, from The University of the Third Age, banks and lawyers. A wide range of clubs and educational visits, including an annual residential trip where pupils get a taste of working life on a real farm, further enrich pupils' learning.

- The school promotes British values and prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. Values such as tolerance and respect are fundamental to the life of the school, and are promoted not only in assemblies but also through philosophy and personal, social and health education lessons. The school provides pupils with direct experience of other ways of life in modern Britain and has links with Ghana, France and Poland to expand pupils' awareness of other cultures and beliefs.

- The school has exceptionally good procedures for keeping pupils safe, and its safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. It carries out stringent checks on staff and other adults who work with the pupils, and ensures that they are fully trained. It works very closely with external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, often going well 'beyond the call of duty' to help pupils in particular difficulties.

- The school works well in partnership with parents. It listens to their views and does its best to involve them in their children's learning. It has provided workshops and other events to help them to support learning at home and communicates with them regularly through the use of home-school diaries.

- The local authority has provided good support to the school and has an accurate view of its effectiveness. The school has drawn on the help of English and mathematics advisers, which has helped to improve teaching in these areas, and senior leaders receive regular support with their self-evaluation and data analysis.

- Leaders have brought about some important improvements in the early years since the last inspection, but these have not been sufficient to ensure that most children are well prepared for moving up to Year 1. Early years teachers and teaching assistants have received training to increase their effectiveness, but staff changes in the Reception classes have reduced the impact of this on children's achievement.

- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective, and the governing body is ambitious for the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and hold senior leaders to account. They are able to talk about what data reveal and are suitably well informed about the spending and impact of pupil premium funding. Governors bring valuable professional expertise to their role, and they use this in conducting regular visits to the school to check its work for themselves.
  - The governing body is well informed about the quality of teaching. Its members make sure that the most effective teachers are recognised financially, and they have supported the headteacher in tackling underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school conveys very high expectations to pupils about the way they should behave, and they nearly always respond accordingly. In lessons in Year 6 in particular, pupils give their work total concentration, and their behaviour is exemplary. From the early years onwards, clear routines are established, and the staff are consistent in the way they manage pupils' behaviour.

- The school charter, which sets out the basic rules to be followed, was written by pupils for pupils. Among other things, it urges them 'to ensure expectations are met, to soar to the highest standards on every occasion, and to present yourself and your work with pride'.

- Pupils say that they enjoy school, and their books are testimony to the enormous pride they take in their work. They are beautifully presented, and those of all abilities carefully follow the school's approach to handwriting. A similar care is evident in the quality of pupils' artwork. For instance, miniature gardens on the theme of 'people in glasshouses should not throw stones' have been lovingly and precisely finished. In the headteacher's words, 'We want our pupils to be completer finishers.'

- The school has a comprehensive system for rewards, which feeds into its house system. Where pupils have made a particular effort with their work or achieved especially well, the school is quick to celebrate their success by sending a postcard to their parents.

- The school has worked hard, with close checks on pupils' absence, to achieve an attendance rate that is broadly average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and that they know how to keep themselves secure. Visiting speakers, such as representatives from the NSPCC (the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children), give presentations on keeping safe and on e-safety, and the curriculum provides pupils with detailed guidance on other aspects of safety. Pupils are vigilant for one another; for example, during the inspection when the temperature was high, pupils at Key Stage 1 advised their classmates not to run as it was too hot.

- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that the school is very quick to act if any instances of bullying take place. This is confirmed by the school's own records, and nearly all parents believe that bullying is dealt with effectively.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has built on the good teaching found at the last inspection. The school's own records of teaching, information about pupils' progress, work in their books and other inspection findings confirm that teaching is good, and it is outstanding in Year 6.

- Teachers have very positive relationships with their pupils and use their good subject knowledge to motivate pupils' interest in learning. Expectations are consistently high, and lessons are planned thoroughly so that they nearly always meet the wide range of needs in each of the large open-plan classrooms. In all subjects, pupils are made aware of those aspects of their work that are 'non-negotiables': teachers always expect to see evidence of these in pupils' books alongside any new learning that takes place.

- The teaching of reading is good throughout the school. Phonics teaching (the sounds that letters represent) is matched closely to the next steps in learning for different groups of pupils, and the school uses a very effective system for teaching phonics. There are weekly checks on pupils' reading and their comprehension, and the school has updated its books to increase their appeal for boys. An 'accelerated reading programme' is in place for pupils who need extra help, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have received support in small groups for phonics.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. Work is matched closely to next steps in pupils' learning so that it is at the right level of challenge for all of them, and it is quite usual in lessons to find work at several different levels of difficulty. Teachers make sure that pupils cover a wide range of topics, and there are good opportunities for them to develop problem-solving skills and dexterity in working with numbers. Teachers' explanations are clear and they ask focused questions to check pupils' understanding, though occasionally they do not provide enough time for pupils to discuss new concepts.

- The teaching of writing has been a major focus this year, and it is now good. A highly structured new approach is already having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. This ensures that pupils build their skills systematically as they move through a piece of work. Teachers give them plenty of opportunity to plan, organise and edit their writing. There are regular sessions on grammar and weekly spelling tests, and teachers have the same high expectations of pupils' writing in other subjects as they do in literacy lessons.

- Teachers provide very clear information to pupils about what they need to do to succeed, and pupils receive excellent guidance and advice in Year 6. Marking identifies for pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers give them time to respond to marking, and any pupil who is not successful in grasping new learning attends catch-up club during break or lunchtime.

- Work is matched closely to the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and they receive a lot of individual attention in lessons. They benefit a great deal from working in smaller groups, sometimes with a teacher and sometimes a teaching assistant. Those who need in-depth support at Key Stages 1 and 2 receive well-judged help from skilled teaching assistants.

- There is some good teaching in the early years, but it is not consistently good enough to enable the

children to make as much progress as they could in all areas of learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school's own data for pupils currently in the school, the work in their books and lesson observations show that achievement is good in mathematics, reading and writing at Key Stages 1 and 2.

- Many children join the Reception classes with skills that are low in communication and language, in literacy, mathematics and understanding of the world. Children's skills are broadly in line with that typically found for their age in other areas of learning.

- The school's results in the screening of pupils' knowledge of phonics at the end of Year 1 were slightly above average in 2014, an improvement on the previous year. The proportion of pupils who successfully retook the test in Year 2 in 2014 was in line with the national average. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in developing their knowledge of phonics because it is taught consistently well in all year groups.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics over the last two years. Although standards for pupils currently in Year 2 are still below those expected for their age they are marginally better than in 2014. Furthermore, when pupils' low attainment on entry to Year 1 is taken into account, it is clear that progress at Key Stage 1 has been good in recent years.

- The school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly average in 2013, and they were again average in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2014. Attainment dipped last year, however, in mathematics and writing. Pupils who left school at the end of Year 6 last year made good progress in reading during their time in Key Stage 2. An average proportion of them made the expected amount of progress in mathematics and writing, but fewer pupils made better than expected progress. The school's own data show, however, that pupils in other year groups at Key Stage 2 last year had nearly all made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was marginally better than that of their classmates in 2014 in mathematics and writing and a term behind them in writing. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was two terms behind that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. They made better progress than their classmates in mathematics and writing, but slightly less progress in reading. They made similar progress to all pupils nationally in mathematics, but slightly less progress in reading and writing.

- Current standards at the end of Year 6 are average for their age in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Pupils have achieved well in reading and mathematics, where a substantial proportion (though fewer than in 2014) have made more than expected progress across Key Stage 2. All pupils have made the expected amount of progress in writing which is an improvement on last year.

- The substantial amount of good-quality work in pupils' books shows that pupils are achieving well at Key Stages 1 and 2. Improvements in the teaching of writing are having a very positive effect, but it is too soon for these to have had a full impact on outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2. Handwriting is of an exemplary quality throughout the school: it is fluent and consistent in pupils' books, regardless of the subject.

- Pupils' high-quality artwork in a range of media in two and three dimensions is displayed throughout the school, including carefully constructed angel figurines on the theme of 'flight'. The project with The Perse School made a major impact on the achievement of the pupils concerned. One wrote, 'In King's College Chapel, it was almost like a dream. The detail in the fan-patterned ceilings and beautiful, colourful stained-glass windows created an atmosphere of peace and calm.'

- Standards are also high in music, as evidenced during the inspection when pupils prepared for a music performance. They applied specialist-breathing techniques and sang in complex harmonies, controlling

their pitch and volume very effectively.

- The most able pupils make good progress. In mathematics, they produce a substantial amount of work and by Year 6 have opportunities to practise Level 6 test papers to develop their skills. In writing, they produce some highly imaginative work. For example, in writing an advertisement for a box of chocolates, a pupil wrote: 'Berries Ballet will present to you dancing flavours… exhibited in the form of twirls of strawberries, cherries, blackberries and blueberries, drenched in liqueur, exclusive only to this remarkable box of chocolates. The final sensation-burst for your taste buds, the surprising twirls and twists have been layered in silky smooth white chocolate, bound to sensate.'

- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made less progress than their classmates. This is not the case for these groups currently in the school, or for pupils of minority ethnic heritage, and their needs are met well at Key Stages 1 and 2.

- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was well below average in 2013 and 2014, despite an improvement on the very low standards in 2012. There was a substantial gap between the attainment of boys and that of girls at the end of the Reception Year in 2014, when a low proportion of boys reached a good level of development.

- Many children this year have made good progress in a number of areas of learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, but the proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has only improved slightly. Attainment remains well below that typically found for their age in speaking and listening, and although the gap between boys and girls has narrowed, it is still wider than that found nationally.

The early years provision requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the early years requires improvement. While aspects of provision and leadership are good, the school's overall results are held back by too many children not being prepared well enough for moving up to Year 1. This is because they do not all make as much progress as they could, particularly in developing their communication and language skills, and girls tend to do better than boys.

- The school provides some sessions that are aimed specifically at promoting children's speaking and listening skills, but the staff frequently miss opportunities throughout the day to extend and develop children's language. This is because the way they question children does not probe their thinking deeply enough, and they do not take the opportunity to introduce a wealth of new vocabulary as part of everyday activities. At the time of the inspection, there were no role-play opportunities in any of the Reception classrooms to extend children's language and communication, and 'free-play' sessions were not always planned well enough.

- In addition, expectations of less able children are too high at times when they are given exactly the same work as the rest of the class. Some written work in their learning journals is unfinished because it was too difficult for them, and these children met with limited success during the inspection when the whole class was asked to make a vessel that would float on water.

- For these reasons, the quality of teaching requires improvement, although some aspects of teaching and learning are good. The teaching of phonics is good and teachers are very effective in supporting children's early writing, ensuring that they form their letters accurately. They provide good opportunities for them to write for a range of purposes, to learn to count and to add and subtract numbers. The children behave exceptionally well and routines are well established. They clearly feel very safe and enjoy trusting relationships with the staff.

- The school liaises closely with the nursery, and arrangements for gathering information about children's attainment when they join the Reception classes are thorough. The school involves parents very well in this process and provides good opportunities for them to support their children's learning at home.

What inspection judgements mean

School Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	110775
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	456031

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ben Slade
Headteacher	Josephine Angel
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2011
Telephone number	01223 518330
Fax number	01223 506014
Email address	finance@kingshedges.cambs.sch.uk

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